

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 01285 171041Z

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R 170800Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3044

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 1285

STERNER TO WILLIAMSON LETTER OF APRIL 16, 1975.

E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ABLD, TC

SUBJ: POSSIBILITY FOR LEASING NEW EMBASSY OFFICE SPACE

1. WE HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BY LOCAL MANAGER OF BRITISH BANK OF MIDDLE EAST WITH POSSIBILITY OF LEASING OFFICE SPACE FOR CHANCERY IN NEW, PRESTIGIOUS OFFICE BLOCK WHICH WILL BE PUT UP BY PROMINENT UAE NATIONAL. COMPLETION DATE WOULD BE IN ABOUT 2-1/2-3 YEARS. LOCATION IS ON EASTERN EDGE OF ABU DHABI BUSINESS DISTRICT. BUILDING IS ABOUT TO ENTER PRELIMINARY DESIGN STAGE AND OWNER WOULD BE WILLING TO HAVE TWO FLOORS DESIGNED TO OUR REQUIREMENTS AS FAR AS INTERNAL ARRANGMENTS ARE CONCERNED. EACH FLOOR WOULD PROVIDE ABOUT 900 SQUARE METERS, WITH TOP FLOOR SOMEWHAT LESS THAN THIS. OWNER WOULD BE WILLING GIVE US TOP TWO FLOORS AND OTHERWISE MEET OUR REQUIREMENTS OF GIVING US EXCLUSIVE USE OF ONE OF ELEVATORS, CONSTRUCTION OF VAULT, EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OVER ROOF. BUILDING EXPECTED TO BE 13 OR 14 STORIES IN HEIGHT, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FINE VIEW FROM TOP FLOORS. SINCE OWNER'S TALKS WITH BANK AND ARCHITECTS ARE STILL IN PRELIMINARY STAGE, HE CANNOT AT THIS POINT GIVE US ANY IDEA OF PROBABLE PRICE. ACCORDING TO BANK, OWNER HAS DETERMINED THAT THIS WILL BE FIRST-CLASS OFFICE BLOCK, WITH INTENTION OF ATTRACTING MAJOR FIRMS IN ABU DHABI. BANK THINKS OWNER ALSO WOULD BE WILLING TO PROVIDE COVERED SPACE FOR EMBASSY VEHICLES, IMPORTANT FEATURE IN ABU DHABI.

2. AS WE HAVE RECOMMENDED IN REFERENCE LETTER AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS, WE BELIEVE DEPARTMENT SHOULD MAKE UP ITS MIND SOON AS TO
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PAGE 02 ABU DH 01285 171041Z

WHETHER WE INTEND TO BUILD NEW CHANCERY ON GOVERNMENT-DESIGNATED

PLOT OR TO MOVE TO BETTER LEASED QUARTERS. BUILDING WE ARE IN PRESENTLY

IS NOT ONLY CRAMPED IN TERMS OF SPACE GIVEN RECENT EXPANSION OF EMBASSY BUT INCREASINGLY SHABBY IN APPEARANCE IN RELATION TO NEWER OFFICE BLOCKS WHICH ARE GOING UP ALL OVER ABU DHABI. WHILE WE CAN MANAGE IN PRESENT QUARTERS FOR NEXT FEW YEARS, PRESENT BUILDING WILL NOT BE ADEQUATE OVER LONGER PERIOD EITHER IN TERMS OF SPACE OR OF IMAGE THAT USG SHOULD PROJECT HERE. IF WE CANNOT GET MONEY TO BUILD CHANCERY, AND TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR IT NOW, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BEGIN TO LOOK SERIOUSLY INTO OPPORTUNITIES TO MOVE INTO NEW LEASED QUARTERS FOR NEXT 5-10 YEARS PERIOD. OPPORTUNITY BROACHED BY BBME LOOKS LIKE PROMISING ONE TO US AND ONE WHICH WE SHOULD PURSUE IF WE DO NOT INTEND TO BUILD SOON. LOCATION WOULD BE GOOD AND SPACE WOULD

APPEAR TO BE ABOUT RIGHT FOR OUR PRESENT NEEDS PLUS ALLOWANCE FOR SMALL

AMOUNT OF GROWTH IN TERMS OF EMBASSY'S FUNCTIONS AND STAFF OVER NEXT DECADE.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT ADVICE AS TO WHETHER IT WISHES EMBASSY TO PURSUE THIS LEASING ARRANGMENT FOR NEW CHANCERY QUARTERS. STERNER

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